

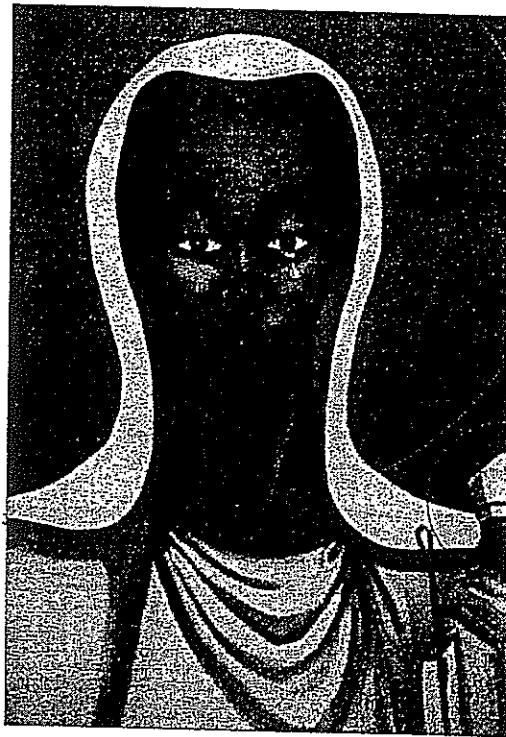
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## *St. Monica*

† 322?-387

† North Africa

† Patron of parents, mothers



The feast of St. Monica occurs the day before the feast of her son, St. Augustine. Her tears, prayers, and sacrifices over many years helped bring about his conversion. It is only proper that their feasts are celebrated close together.

Monica was born in North Africa. As a child she lived with her family, but she and her sisters were raised by an elderly servant. This wise

woman had also raised Monica's father.

As a young girl, Monica had a shocking experience. According to the custom of the time, her parents would ask her to bring up wine from the cellar for them. Once Monica took a sip of the wine before she brought it up. After that, she gradually began to drink just a little more each day. She thought no one

knew about it. Then one day, Monica quarreled with a servant, and the servant accused her of drinking too much. Monica realized that the maid was right. This helped her to face this temptation. She decided then and there to stop drinking and she did.

Monica was raised a Christian, but was given in marriage to a pagan official named Patricius. They had three sons. Patricius was not only a violent man, but he had a number of other bad habits as well. Monica remained patient. Other wives with marriage problems came to her for advice. A year before Patricius died, he was converted—due to Monica's powerful example. In their early years of marriage Monica's mother-in-law turned against her because of ugly rumors spread by unhappy servants. Through patient forgiveness, Monica was able to win her cooperation.

Another source of worry for Monica was her son Augustine. This brilliant and gifted young man rejected the faith his mother had taught him. Augustine lived an immoral life and had a son although he was not married. Monica was ready to disown Augustine, but in a dream it was revealed to her that eventually he would come back to the faith. She prayed and fasted for

her son and stayed close to him, following him to Rome and Milan. In Milan, she met Ambrose, the bishop, who became her spiritual director. He promised her, "Surely the son of so many tears will not perish."

It was Ambrose who finally converted Augustine. Together, Augustine, Monica, Augustine's son, and some other devoted people moved to the country to pray and write. From there they began a journey back to Africa. Monica died on the way. The day before she died, she and her son had a beautiful conversation about the joys of heaven.

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*St. Monica, pray for our mothers!*

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† Make a thank-you card or a corsage for your mother or another person who is like a mother to you, such as the school secretary.

† Memorize and pray the prayers before and after meals.

† Pray for sinners.

† Find out more about St. Monica's famous son Augustine.